

Fatal Blast Is Laid to Dynamite

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ANNAPOLIS, March 14—Maryland Gov. Martin Mandel released today an FBI report saying that the automobile explosion that took the lives of two associates of H. Rap Brown was caused by dynamite. The report said the two men must have known the dynamite was in the car.

But the Governor and the Maryland state police, in a shift of position, said they are drawing no conclusions about whether the dynamite was carried in the car deliberately and exploded accidentally, or whether it was planted there without the men's knowledge.

The FBI's investigation of the explosion, which occurred Monday night at Bel Air, Md., is continuing.

Strong suggestions earlier in the week by Maryland authorities that the explosion was an accident touched off criticism from both whites and blacks.

After a press conference with the Governor today, State Police Lt. Col. Thomas S. Smith, in answer to a reporter's question, said it was "certainly possible" that the victims of the blast had just discovered the dynamite, hidden under the seat or elsewhere, and were trying to move it when the explosion occurred.

Smith, though allowing the possibility, said there is no evidence to support this hypothesis. Later in the day the Governor said the amount of dy-

namite indicated by the force of the blast could not have fit under the seat.

A check by The Washington Post on a similar car, a 1964 Dodge Dart, showed that there is a space 3 inches high and 23 inches wide beneath the front part of the seat on the passenger's side. The FBI report said the blast occurred on that side. There is more space farther back, but it is not accessible from the front without raising the seat.

The deaths of the two men, Ralph E. Featherstone, 30, and William H. (Che) Payne, 26, forced a week's postponement of Brown's trial on Maryland charges of incitement to riot and arson in Cambridge in 1967. The trial is scheduled to reopen Monday, with jury selection following a day later.

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REPORT, From A1

The FBI report, described by officials here as "preliminary," was generally in line with initial police theories that the explosive charge must have been in plain view on the right front floor of the car at the moment of the blast.

Clock and battery fragments found at the scene "could represent an electrical firing system for a bomb," the report said.

Brown's attorney, William M. Kunstler, arrived in Washington from New York at noon today to go to Featherstone's funeral. Kunstler immediately rejected the FBI report of the bombing incident.

"All the official stories are going to be the same," Kunstler told reporters at National Airport. "I just don't buy that. I'm always suspicious of the official story . . . I don't trust the FBI on matters involving black people."

300 at Service

Memorial services for Featherstone, 30, a Washington resident and officer with Brown of the Student National (formerly Nonviolent) Coordinating Committee, were held at 1 p.m. at the Stewart Funeral Home, 4001 Benning Rd. NE. More than 300 people, all but a few of them Negroes, attended.

Kunstler said he still has no idea where Brown is, saying his client has "disappeared from the face of the earth . . . he could be dead, he could be missing, he could be held" somewhere against his will.

Kunstler said he thought "untrue" a report that Brown is still living in his New York apartment. A law enforce-

ment official had said he had information to that effect. Kunstler said he had telephoned the apartment regularly without success, and has not seen Brown or spoken to him for nearly two weeks.

Bondsman in Dark

In Cambridge, where Brown was arraigned and posted a \$10,000 bond to assure his appearance in court, an official of the company that put up the bond denied press reports that she has heard from him. The official, Lavinia Brooks of the Eastern Shore Bail Bond Co., said she has no idea where Brown is and has not heard from him at all.

The FBI report released here today by Mandel was in line with a separate investigation by Maryland's deputy medical examiner, Dr. Werner U. Spitz, officials said. Spitz said the dynamite "could not have been located under the seat" of the car, a borrowed 1964 Dodge Dart.

The doctor said he based this belief on the injuries received by the two men, as determined by an autopsy.

Jammed at 55

Sgt. Wilbert Travers, an accident investigation specialist with the Maryland State Police, said at the governor's press conference here today that the speedometer in the exploded car was stopped at 55 miles per hour.

Travers said this indicated that the car, which was headed away from Bel Air toward Washington when it exploded at 11:42 p.m. Monday, was moving at the time of the blast. The speed limit at the site of the explosion is 50 miles per hour.

Mandel emphasized today that "we're not drawing any conclusions" about the blast. "We're just trying to present to you the evidence as it has been gathered . . . the FBI is still continuing its investigation."

Maryland's 10 Negro legis-

lators, who met with the governor before the press conference, were divided in their reaction to the FBI report.

Investigation Praised

Del. Arthur King (D-Prince George's) said he felt the investigators were proceeding in a fair, orderly manner.

Sen. Clarence Mitchell III (D-Baltimore), who had been critical of Maryland authorities' handling of the incident, said today that "the governor and the state police have laid out all the evidence. I'm happy to hear that no conclusions have been drawn . . . I think this was a point of major concern."

Mitchell, who said he had known Featherstone for 10 years, said he found it "difficult to believe" that the man he knew would carry a bomb. He said he didn't know Payne.

None of the officials participating with Mandel in the press conference had any new information about Featherstone's activities on the day of the explosion. Police said they would interview many more people "from the Washington area" on this point, but preferred to wait until after today's funeral.

The FBI report did not consider the explosion, a day after the Bel Air incident, that tore open the courthouse in Cambridge, Md. A separate investigation into that incident, in which no one was injured, is continuing.